

## Objects Gently Modified (OGM)

Exhibition produced by the association Art Image, Chalon sur Soane,  
Supported by le Grand Chalon, l'association de sauvegarde de l'église de Cortiambles,  
l'office de tourisme de Givry-côte chalonnaise, la ville de Givry

When we were invited last year to exhibit in the church at Cortiambles, Will Menter decided that he wanted to make a monumental sculpture that traversed the whole space of the church, I responded by choosing to work in the two chapels and make work that was a complete contrast:

ephemeral, fragile and delicately balanced.

There are however several points in common within our work: we both responded to the architecture of the site, made work that used the structure of arches to stand up, and worked principally in wood.

As a starting point for my structures I used the branches cut from the trunks of the oak trees that Will has used in Bois Contre Bois – trees product of thinning in a local wood. The inverted branches installed at the centre of each chapel echo the vaulted architecture and were chosen for their relationship with the space of the rooms, each with a different character and scale.

south chapel:

Responding to the colours in the vestiges of ochre painting found on the walls of this chapel, I chose to remove the bark from the branches and reveal the warm tones of the wood underneath. I then constructed with other materials that had the same earth colours; raspberry canes from my garden, horse chestnut leaves and red clay. The central space created by the branches remains empty and the added plant elements form a rising spiral around the outside.

There is no genetic engineering involved in my Objects Gently Modified (OGM) just a sculptural rearrangement of natural elements – earth, branches and fragments of plants gathered locally and constructed on site.

north chapel:

Travelling between Changey and Cortiambles every day, I scoured the countryside looking for plant elements that I could work with in the north chapel with its different colour range. The flags of the wild sorrel present in the roadside all the way along the journey immediately made links with the ochre colours that I had been working with the previous days, and I decided to bring this colour into the cooler toned space. The sorrel used in my installation was cut from the site of the red quarry found at the entrance to Givry. I mixed red ochre and natural sienna with red clay to find a colour for the line of paint on the walls, like the plants this paint suspended from above, also flows downwards towards the ground.

My work has long been concerned with earth and plants, their constantly changing relationship, and ours with them. I am fascinated by the use of earth in architecture, a material that is still used for half of dwellings in the world, and the dichotomy of fragility and longevity of these buildings. This duality, I hope, is reflected in my work.

My first sculptures made from natural elements were produced during a workshop with British sculptor David Nash when I was an art student in the UK 30 years ago... my work has subsequently been informed by that of other compatriots Richard Long and Andy Goldsworthy (amongst others)

Jane Norbury july 2010